

# P R E F A C E

*Capital Engineers* began as a revision and update of Albert E. Cowdrey's *A City for the Nation: The Army Engineers and the Building of Washington, 1790–1967*, published in 1979 by the Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, under its old title, the Historical Division. Cowdrey's book was a quarter of a century old, long out of print, and did not, of course, reflect the tremendous growth of interest and research in the history of Washington, D.C., since its publication. In addition the book did not reflect the growing interest in and capability of providing sophisticated and valuable graphic material. While *A City for the Nation* included many images, it did not begin to tap the rich visual resources available on the history of Army Engineer work in the city. So the desire for an improved, more current, and better illustrated history of the role of Army Engineers in the development of the nation's capital led to this book.

The new publication began when Dr. Martin Gordon, a historian in the office and specialist in the history of the District of Columbia, engaged Ms. Pamela Scott, a well-known and well-respected architectural historian and historian of Washington, to revise the Cowdrey text. When Dr. Gordon left the office for a new position, I inherited the project. When I saw the excellent revised text that Ms. Scott was producing and looked at the now dated look and concept of the old history, it seemed to me that both the subject matter and the resources available argued for a much more ambitious publication.

The office had already engaged Mr. Douglas J. Wilson and Ms. Emelie M. George of R&D Associates, a historical research and writing company, to undertake an intensive inventory of the visual resources available on the history of the Corps of Engineers, including its work in Washington, in local archives and libraries. Mr. Wilson's research was unearthing a wealth of images beyond the already substantial collection in the office's own Research Collections.

The new technology of digital photography and scanning made access to this visual material easier and more effective. For example, the *Annual Reports of the Chiefs of Engineers* are filled with maps, charts, and photographs that have scarcely been exploited due partially to the difficulties of reproducing the material. Now very large maps and charts can be scanned and enhanced if they are in poor condition and used very effectively as illustrations. Ms. Jean Diaz, editor, Office

of History, and Ms. Jessa Poppenhager, a student formerly employed in the office, were adept at scanning difficult images, especially large ones that had to be reassembled digitally, and cleaning and enhancing these historic maps and images without losing their authenticity and charm.

An excellent text and access to a plethora of visual materials led me to envision a publication that relied on both text and images. After all, the Army Engineers' work involved to a large extent construction of edifices, and it makes little sense to write about the built environment and not show it. Text and images with captions can be intertwined to both complement and supplement each other producing a more nuanced and sophisticated historical product than either could produce alone. So the new conception of this publication involved a heavy investment of time in both textual and image writing and research.

The group responsible for producing this history readily agreed to the new conception and worked long hours to make it a reality. Ms. Scott gave (and I use that word partially in its literal sense) generously of her time and effort. The newly-conceived book was much more than she had originally anticipated and would not have been possible without her enthusiastic support. She also kindly shared material from her own rich collection of documents and images on the history of Washington.

Douglas J. Wilson combined a talent for image research with a talent for image management. In some ways the revolution in printing that allows books to go to print on CDs has complicated the job of the book's producers. The entire team played a role in selecting the images for the book from the wealth of choices Mr. Wilson provided. He deftly managed paper copies, photographic copies, and digital scans of images and combined them with captions, credits, and other information along with the status and even size of the image into a complex but essential Excel chart that became the Bible of the group. Mr. Wilson and I wrote the captions and Ms. Scott reviewed, corrected, and embellished them. In addition the entire group reviewed the text and the page proofs.

No publication can succeed without the services of a good editor. Ms. Jean Diaz was a key member of the group. She carefully and conscientiously edited the text and captions and reviewed all the page proofs. We relied on her not only to correct our grammar and punctuation but also to clarify our meaning. She watched our schedule closely urging us on to greater efforts as deadlines grew near. Her patience and good humor helped everyone through those days and weeks that were the most trying. Even in this digital age, mistakes are made, and an editor is on the front lines and in the most exposed position in the battle to find and correct them. Jean's careful eye on the text, images, and design of the book were critical to the production of this publication.

My colleagues in the Office of History assisted in the preparation of this book in a variety of ways. Dr. John Lonnquest and Dr. Michael Brodhead read early chapters of the text and

provided invaluable comments. Mr. James Garber assisted with image research and scanning. Ms. Anna Punchak, administrative officer, provided administrative support. Other colleagues were interested and encouraging and helped by relieving me of some of my other duties. Dr. Paul K. Walker, chief of the office, supported the project enthusiastically but critically from the beginning. All departures from standard practice and every commitment of resources received his careful scrutiny helping us to focus on what was important and clarify our decisions to embark in new directions. But he never hindered our creativity nor dampened our enthusiasm.

Mr. Mark Baker, historian in the Baltimore Engineer District, provided valuable comments on the final chapter, and he and Dr. Charles Walker, a historian and former executive assistant in the district, helped define the areas in which the Baltimore District played a role in the recent history of Washington. In addition Mr. Baker provided very useful photographic material. Mr. Thomas Jacobus, chief of the aqueduct; Mr. David MacGregor; and Mr. Billy Wright of the Washington Aqueduct Division of the district gave us access to the collection of images stored in the headquarters building at Dalecarlia, and Mr. Wright was both patient and very helpful as we delved into the rich resources of the collection.

We were fortunate to obtain the services of EEI Communications for the production of the book. About a decade ago, EEI worked for a multi-service group, including the Office of History, to produce Robert P. Grathwol and Donita M. Moorhus's *American Forces in Berlin: Cold War Outpost, 1945–1994* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program Cold War Project, 1994), a visually striking publication. Fortunately the project manager for the earlier book, Jayne Sutton, was also EEI's project manager for this publication. A book that relies so heavily on visual material requires the early participation of the production team. We explained our concept of the book to Jayne and her colleagues, especially Roy Quini who was responsible for design of the cover and special features of the book, and Sharon Martin, and worked closely with them to define what was possible and worked interactively to obtain a visually attractive and effective design. Everyone worked on a tight schedule and sought to accommodate our vision of the book and the realities of time and funding. EEI's handsome and intelligent design helped us approach the goal of maximizing the effectiveness of both text and images.

Authors get their names on a book's cover and spine, but good authors know that many other names should accompany theirs. This book in particular because of its conception and its history was truly a collaborative effort. Every member of the group was critical to its completion, and every member of the group is willing and able to say that they share in its failings and accomplishments.

William C. Baldwin

September 2005